

**THE RHODE ISLAND CONVENTION CENTER AUTHORITY
BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
MARKETING COMMITTEE MEETING**

February 26, 2008

A meeting of the Marketing Committee of the Rhode Island Convention Center Authority Board of Commissioners was held on February 26, 2008 pursuant to notice at the Rhode Island Convention Center Boardroom, One Sabin Street, Providence, Rhode Island.

Board members present were Chairman Dale Venturini, and Commissioner Jeff Hirsh.

Also in attendance were Jim McCarvill, Betty Sullivan and Kerrie Bennett, RICCA; Martha Sheridan and Neil Schriever, PWCVB; Tim Muldoon Debbie Tuton, Arlene Oliva and John McGinn, RICC; Larry Lepore, Cheryl Schadone, Kym Chevian and Eleanor SanAntonio, Dunkin' Donuts Center; Benjamin Gedan, Providence Journal; Dave DePetrillo, RIEDC; Evan Smith, Newport CVB; Robert Bromley and Amy Mendella, Senate Fiscal Office and Eileen Smith, recording secretary.

Ms. Venturini called the meeting to order at 12:30 pm.

Ms. Venturini asked everyone to introduce themselves. Noting that a quorum was not present, Ms. Venturini asked that approval of the minutes be delayed until more Commissioners arrived.

DUNKIN' DONUTS CENTER

Ms. Venturini asked Ms. Schadone to address the Committee. Ms. Schadone reported that media coverage for the Station Fire event was wonderful. She noted that the concert will be aired on VHI on Easter Sunday and also on PBS. Ms. Schadone noted that the event was an extremely touching and amazing event. The diverse group of entertainers put on a great performance. Ms. Schadone reported on upcoming events that include Providence Bruins Hockey, PC Basketball, Monster Jam, Smucker's Stars on Ice and the Harlem Globetrotters. Ms. Schadone reported on the state of the arena industry. She noted that record companies and revenue from recorded music is down because of today's technology. Ms. Schadone said that bands are increasing their touring schedules which would lead to more live shows becoming available for the arena. She noted that agents are becoming more important in the process. Ms. Venturini asked about competition with area casinos. Ms. Schadone highlighted the actions that are being taken to assure that the Dunkin' Donuts Center is positioned to benefit from the industry trends. Mr. Lepore noted that we have had some issues with Mohegan Sun but that there is an on-going effort to market the arena to promoters and agents as a separate market.

Mr. Fowler arrived at 12:40 p.m. at which time a quorum was reached.

PROVIDENCE/WARWICK CVB

Mr. Schriever began his presentation. Mr. Schriever highlighted the sales activity for January. Mr. Schriever reported that Fidelity Investments and Staples had signed contracts for May 2008 and Mary Kay, Inc. and approved a multi year contract for March 2009 and 2010.

Mr. Schriever noted that there are several tentative bookings for the complex. They include the International Cake Exploration Society, the Society for Investigative Dermatology and the American Society of Civil Engineers. Mr. Schriever noted other bookings that the CVB is working to secure are the RI Amateur Hockey Association, the American Academy of Neurology and the Hospitality Performance Network. Mr. Schriever reported that the US Psychiatric Association, Family, Career and Community Leaders of America and MQX Machine Quilters Expo representatives have or will soon be here for site inspections. Mr. Schriever noted that the CVB has participated in travel and trade shows during the month and have come away with several leads. Mr. Schriever noted that the Valentines Day Phone Blitz was a success. He said that the participants were the PWCVB and the Convention Center as well as the Westin, Renaissance, Marriott, Courtyard and the Biltmore. Mr. Schriever explained a new collaborative sales and marketing effort among the state capitals of Baton Rouge, LA, Providence, R.I., Raleigh, N.C. and St. Paul Minn. Mr. Schriever noted that although the cities are culturally distinct and geographically diverse their facilities are similar in size and amenities. Mr. Schriever stated that having a collection would make it

easier for event planners to rotate their events to similar venues. Ms. Sheridan reported that training had taken place for drivers employed by Airport Taxi. She stated that the training was very well received and the drivers were enthusiastic. Ms. Sheridan noted that there is an opportunity to distribute information in the taxis to our visitors. Ms. Sheridan noted that the exercise was very successful and that she looks forward to repeating the process with other companies and independent drivers. Mr. Smith informed the Committee that the fare for a taxi from the airport to Newport is \$90.00. He stated that the fee structure is something that needs to be addressed.

Mr. Duffy arrived at 1:00 p.m.

CONVENTION CENTER

John McGinn reported that the Convention Center sales staff was working hard to secure several tentative events. Mr. McGinn noted that he is confident that these groups will sign contracts in the near future. He said that the American Physical Society APS Division is looking at October 2012. Mr. McGinn said that this group is a non-profit scientific and educators association that would attract physicists involved in the field of plasma physics. Mr. McGinn said that the International Association of Assembly Managers, Inc. (IAAM) would be another new event for Sept. 2009. Continuing with tentative events, Mr. McGinn reported on a new convention Zero to Three National Training Institute and a first time event for the Convention

Center, Americans for the Arts. Mr. McGinn stated that 2009 looks like it will be a good year. Mr. McGinn said that site inspections include the United States Border Patrol which is possibly coming to Providence and the Convention Center to hold interviews for new workers, Fidelity Investments and Cambridge Health Tech Institute. Mr. McGinn reported that the Convention Center had hosted a Fidelity Investment Customer Appreciation event at the Dunkin' Donuts Center party suite. He said that the guests enjoyed Dancing with the Stars. Mr. McGinn reported that collectively Fidelity is our largest revenue producing account annually. Mr. McGinn reported on a new marketing tool. www.cvbhotrates.com is a public website designed to help clients find meeting destinations. Mr. McGinn stated that a link can be found on the PWCVB website and the Convention Center is working to get it on theirs. Mr. McGinn noted that the Convention Center is participating in a Peanut Butter Drive for the RI Community Food Bank. He asked that when you go to the grocery store to pick up an extra jar and bring it to the Convention Center. Mr. McGinn said that peanut butter has a long shelf life, is expensive for lower income families and contains a lot of protein.

RHODE ISLAND TOURISM DIVISION UPDATE

RICCA MARKETING COMMITTEE MEETING (2.26.08)

DAVID C. DEPETRILLO

DOMESTIC LESIURE MARKETING

We've been gearing up for our peak season for quite some time and

now we're ready for our Spring/Summer Tourism Season Kickoff on March 11 at 2 PM. Last year we had this event at the new Roger Williams Park Arboretum and got about 200 people and great press. This year we are holding it at the J&W Culinary Museum and using a culinary theme for the event. We'll be featuring everything food-related, like festivals, culinary tours, local foods and great restaurants. We'll wind up desserts from every tourism region in the state.

DOMESTIC GROUP/PACKAGE MARKETING PROGRAM

AT ABA earlier this month we held a very successful New England clambake for tour operators on behalf of all of the six states. This has become the must attend event for key wholesale tour operators. We actually attracted about half of all operators attending ABA and were sold out early on.

The NTA Spring Meet is coming up in April and we have a Pre-familiarization tour for tour operators only as part of a New England Culinary Tour.

INTERNATIONAL MARKETING

Two weeks ago our director of operations Mark Brodeur was in Canada at a meeting of the Travel Media Association of Canada. He has already had follow-up calls from media and requests for a FAM tour.

National Geographic in Germany will do a New England special edition this fall. The Tourism Division and at least six regions will do

a co-op ad in this publication.

PUBLICATIONS

Our 2008 Official Rhode Island Travel Guide and our Spring Summer Events Guide are now at the printers and we'll see copies in two weeks.

SPECIAL PROMOTIONS

Tour Rhode Island is now sold out

NEWPORT CVB

Mr. Smith reported that everyone at the Newport office has been out making sales calls. Mr. McCarvill asked Mr. Smith if anything was going on in the north end of Newport. Mr. Smith stated that gaming in Rhode Island is a major issue but there is nothing planned for the short term. Mr. Duffy asked if Newport Grand was talking about a hotel. Mr. Smith responded that they were but nothing has been done yet.

Ms. Venturini said that the Providence/Newport Ferry is looking for outside funding. She stated that the tourism industry will get involved to save the ferry.

Noting that a quorum had been reached, Ms. Venturini sought a motion to approve the minutes of the January meeting. Upon a

motion duly made by Mr. Fowler and seconded by Mr. Hirsh it was unanimously

VOTED: to approve the minutes of the January meeting.

Ms. Venturini thanked everyone for attending. Upon a motion duly made by Mr. Hirsh and seconded by Mr. Fowler it was unanimously

VOTED: to adjourn at 1:45 pm